

Meeting 4/2025

A meeting of the **Monash Graduate Association (MGA) Executive Committee** will be held from 3:00 - 5:00, Tuesday, 27 May 2025 in the MGA Meeting Room, Clayton Campus and by Zoom.

MINUTES

The meeting commenced at 3:04pm.

1. Formal matters

1.1 Acknowledgement of country

The MGAEC President acknowledged and paid respect to the people of the Kulin nations as the original and ongoing owners and custodians of this unceded land.

1.2 Attendance & Apologies

Present: Yiwen Yuan (Chair), Saham Hettiarachchi (left at 4.00pm), Mohammed Salehan (Zeehan)(left at 4.00pm), Dhanya Menoth Mohan, Yidi Luan, Beauty Nalwendo (arrived at 3.22), Tuhar Yeasmin (left at 4.00pm), Ummatul Siddique (left at 4.20), Aaskah Saraf (arrived at 3.15pm), Vi Hiep Dang, Karan Raman (left at 3.30), Neharika Shah (left at 3:57)

Apologies: Calvin Chow, Kritika Arora and Jeremy Salcedo.

In attendance: Janice Boey, Executive Officer
Charlie Li, HR & Finance Manager
Shinyi Chin, Marketing & Communications Manager

1.3 Consideration of the agenda

No new items were added to the agenda

2. Minutes and Action sheet

2.1 Minutes of meeting April 2025 for confirmation

It was moved:

That the minutes of MGAEC meeting April 2025 be confirmed.

Moved: Saham Hettiarachchi

Seconded: Karan Raman

Carried with no objections.

2.2 Action list register

The Marketing and Communications Manager informed the Committee that, as their term on the Executive Committee is nearing its end, there isn't sufficient time to organise a formal photoshoot for personal branding. However, any Committee members who require profile photos are welcome to contact her directly to arrange a time to have their photo taken. This item is to be marked as completed.

3. Reports

3.1 President's report

Yiwen thanked the Committee for attending the AGM, preparing their reports, and speaking at the meeting. She noted that the AGM went well and highlighted it as a valuable opportunity to hear feedback from students.

3.2 Members' reports

Members' reports were noted.

3.3 Staff report

The staff report was noted.

Ummatul acknowledged Carla's efforts, noting that she is doing an excellent job at Peninsula campus. They mentioned that several interactive events have been scheduled for the campus. While current engagement is limited, it is expected to grow over time.

3.4 April 2025 profit and loss report

The profit and loss report was noted.

The HR and Finance Manager noted that MGA has already received 50% of its 2025 funding from the University.

3.5 April 2025 MGA Newsletters & Social Media Report

The Newsletters and Social Media Report was noted. Shinyi reported a recent decline in newsletter open and click rates; however, the edition featuring the elections received over 200 clicks, which is considered a strong result. Instagram follower numbers continue to grow and are expected to exceed 10,000 this year.

3.6 April 2025 Advocacy Report

Yiwen asked about the types of issues students typically raise in complaints. The Advocacy Manager explained that complaints and grievances often relate to course quality, dissatisfaction with university processes, or the overall student experience.

Saham inquired about the issues categorised as "Other." Ying clarified that these may include matters such as accommodation or requests for laptop funding. She also noted a recent increase in welfare applications over the past month.

3.7 MGAEC meeting attendance records

Yiwen advised the Committee to check the attendance records and to report any inaccuracies to the Executive Officer as this can impact honoraria payments.

4. Business

4.1 Business arising

4.1.1 AGM 2025 Minutes

The MGA AGM was held at 1pm, Wednesday 21 May 2025 by Zoom. The financial audited report and minutes from last year's AGM were passed and, MGAEC members spoke briefly to their reports. One student provided thoughtful feedback on improving awareness of the MGA's role as a grassroots student body. They appreciated that the MGA offers a space where students can give feedback and engage directly—without the layers of hierarchy often found in larger organisations.

4.1.2 International student representation

Saham reported that CAPA is organising state-level roundtables as part of an initiative to form a new national international student organisation. Monash has been invited to send three representatives—one postgraduate and two undergraduate students—to the roundtable on 9 June. He expressed some concerns about CAPA's process and its approach to establishing this new representative body. As he is unable to attend the roundtable, Tuhar has agreed to attend in his place. Saham will meet with Tuhar separately to brief him ahead of the meeting.

4.1.3 HDR stipend campaign

Yiwen provided an update following the approach to the University for support in lobbying the state government as part of the HDR stipend campaign. She noted that the University recommended the MGA collaborate with other universities and local Members of Parliament. A subcommittee will meet to discuss the proposed strategy with CAPA ahead of the next Executive Committee meeting.

4.1.4 Honoraria Payment Q4

The Committee was advised to submit their Q4 member engagement checklist to Calvin by Monday 23 June. In addition, members were advised to prepare a 1-page handover report for the incoming EC members.

4.2 General Business

4.2.1 MGA HSW Roles and Responsibilities Procedures

The Executive Officer explained that the new procedures clearly define the roles and responsibilities of all MGA staff, managers, and the MGAEC in relation to Health, Safety, and Wellbeing (HSW) matters. The Committee noted the procedures as read.

4.2.2 MGA Climate Active recertification for 2025

The HR & Finance Manager reported that the MGA Climate Active recertification is completed for 2025, showing a slight reduction in carbon footprint for MGA. Efforts implemented to achieve this include providing more fresh fruits and vegetables instead of packaged food, sourcing merchandise from local manufacturers and digital advertising. He also reminded Committee members that MGA is the first MSO in Australia to be climate active certified.

4.2.3 VCSPAF Meeting 1 Minutes

The VCSPAF Meeting Minutes were noted as read by the Committee.

4.2.4 Changes to HDR program

Yiwen informed the Committee that MGRO is proposing to remove the 120 Professional Development (PD) hour requirement for PhD students. The proposal is not yet finalised and will need to be submitted to the Academic Board for approval.

The Executive Committee welcomed the proposed change, noting that the MGA has been advocating for the removal of this requirement for some time.

4.2.5 Student Experience Plan

The new Student Experience Plan that was recently announced by the DVCE Student Experience was discussed and it was noted that the Student Experience Committee will be replaced by Student Roundtables, and that VC-SPAF meetings will be a forum to discuss SSAF moving forward. Concerns were raised about the potential dilution of MSO voices and the lack of clarity around the objectives of the new structure. Yiwen noted that the MSOs are in the process of drafting a joint response to question the role of MSOs within the new proposed framework.

4.2.6 Evaluation of current MGA food & relief services

The Committee thanked the graduate students who wrote the report as part of their placement. They acknowledged that the report provided valuable insights and recommendations for MGA's food and relief services.

4.2.7 Website Feedback Form

The Committee noted the report from the website feedback form. Oliver suggested that based on his interactions with students from the events he has attended or hosted, MGA should collaborate with Monash Sport for more diverse event offerings.

5. Next meeting

The next meeting would be held in June 2025 at a time and place to be confirmed by incoming members' availability. The June meeting is the last meeting for the current MGAEC members. During the June meeting, the internal elections for the officebearer positions for the incoming MGAEC members would be held. Only incoming members could participate in standing and voting for the new office-bearer positions.

The meeting closed at 4:58pm

5.1.2 CAPA Reaffiliation

The MGAEC confirmed affiliation with CAPA for **\$10,000** after receiving acceptance from CAPA President. Yiwen advised that she will organise a meeting with CAPA President to discuss further collaborations including HDR stipend campaign. Ryan advised the committee to proceed with cautious optimism given CAPA's tumultuous history.

5.1.3 MGA involvement in the International Student Representation movement at a national level

Saham reported CAPA members are trying to establish a national body for international student representation. CAPA has contacted Monash leadership and other student organisations but not MGA despite MGA representing many international graduate students. The Committee agreed on the principle of having involvement in an international student movement and suggested Saham request a formal proposal from CAPA outlining their goals. Umma emphasised the need to ask CAPA about why MGA wasn't initially consulted.

5.1.3 MGA Audit Report 2025

Charlie presented a comprehensive overview of MGA's financial statements including profit and loss statement, balance sheet, and statement of cash flow.

It is moved:

That the MGA Audit Report for 2024 is confirmed.

Moved: Ummatul Siddique

Seconded: Oliver, Vi Hiep Dang

Carried with no objections.

5.1.4 HDR Stipend Campaigns

The HDR Stipend sub-committee has submitted a proposal to the University collaborate to lobby the federal government to increase the base rate of the RTP stipend. No response received from the University yet.

Yiwen to raise this matter in her meeting with CAPA.

5. Next meeting

The next meeting will be held in May 2025 at a time and place to be confirmed by members' availability.

The meeting closed at 4:45 pm.